making to enable prompt action at the operating stations and exchange of technical information and experience through International bodies such as World Association for Nuclear Operators (WANO) and Candu Owners Group (COG).

Closure of atomic power plants

568. SMT. JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of atomic power plants closed down since 1995-96;

(b) the reasons for their closure;

(c) whether any efforts are being made by Government to revive those plants;

(d) if so, by when they are expected to go on stream; and

(e) the specific steps taken to look into the safety aspects of these plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGENDER K. ALAGH): (a) to (d) No atomic power plant has been closed down so far. However, Unit-1 of Rajasthan Atomic Power Station (RAPS) which is the first pressurised heavy water reactor in India, commissioned in 1972, has been shut down since February, 1994 due to a minor but difficult-to-repair leak from the Over Pressure Relief Device (OPRD). Robotic toolings and specialised technology were developed totally indigenously, mock-up trails were conducted and the leak has been successfully fixed recently. Application for re-starting operation of RAPS-1 has been submitted to the regulatory authority and the unit is expected to be back in operation subject to regulatory clearance during 1997-98.

Unit-2 of Rajasthan Atomic Power Station which has performed well during its commercial operation from April, 1981 upto July 1994, has been shut down from August, 1994 for on masse coolant channel replacement and upgradation of systems. These works are in the nature of capital maintenance and are progressing satisfactorily. RAPS-2 is expected to be re-commissioned during 1997-98.

(e) The safety aspects of nuclear power plants are reviewed regularly by multi-tier safety committee constituted by NPPCIL and AERB. In addition to these reviews, a detailed "Internal Safety Review of Operating Sations" is carried out every five years. "Assessment of safety significant Event Teams (ASSET)" conduct reviews on specific events.

Enhancement of existing level of safety is continuous evolutionary process being carried out based on national and international experience. As part of this process, detailed in-service inspection and on masse coolant channel replacement and upgradation of systems are being carried out in RAPS Unit-2. Extensive in-service inspection of coolant channels was carried out at both the units of Madras Atomic Power Station in the last two years. Likewise, extensive core shroud inspection in the reactor vessel was carried out at both the units of Tarapur Atomic Power Station during their re-fuelling shut-downs. These inspections were carried out as a measure of abudant caution to ensure high levels of operational safety.

Schemes to promote latest technologies in Electronics

569. SHRI GYAN RANJAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the schemes formulated by Government to promote latest technologies in the field of Electronics;

(b) the amount proposed to be spent thereon; and

(c) the present position of the country in comparison to other developing Asian countries in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (PROF. YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) The main schemes of the Department of Electronics to promote development of latest technologies in the field of electronics are Technology Development Council (TDC) Programme, national Radar Council (NRC) Programme, Microelectronics Development Programme, Photonics Development Programme, System Engineering & Consultancy (SECO) and Automotive Electronics Programme, Electronics Materials Development Programme, Industrial Electronics Promotion Programme, National High Voltage Direct Current (NHVDC) project, Advanced Technology Programme in Computer Networking (ERNET), Fifth Generation Computer System Development Programme, Electronics in Health Programme, Rural Electronics Programme and Technology Missions.

(b) The budget estimates for these schemes is Rs. 59.73 crores during 1996-97.

(c) On the whole, India's capabilities in this regard as compared to other developing Asian countries are very favourable.

Population egg consumption in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa

570. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the efforts made to popularise benefits of eggs consumption in rural areas, especially in the North Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, to find market for the excess production;

(b) whether "Eggs on Wheels" programme proposed by the Vizag zone of National Egg Co-ordination Committeee would be assisted in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI DILIP KUMAR RAY): (a) to (d) The Ministry of Food Processing Industries, under one of its Plan schemes extends financial assistance for the development of poultry and egg processing. Financial assistance under this scheme has been extended, inter-alia, to Andhra Pradesh Industrial Development Corporation Limited.

While the Ministry do not have any specific Plan scheme in this regard, the National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC) has been attempting to popularise the benefits of the egg consumption in the country through various mass communication media. The "Eggs on Wheels" programme proposed by the Vizag Zone of NECC would also be assisted by NECC.

Setting up of food processing Industries in Punjab

571. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any policy for setting up of food processing Industries in the backward districts and border areas of Punjab;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken by Government to implement the policy; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI DILIP KUMAR RAY): (a) to (c) Government have been taking various policy measures for the development of food processing in the whole country including backward areas. However, these measures are not State